

APPOINTMENT OF HON. FRANK R. WOLF AND HON. TOM DAVIS TO ACT AS SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE TO SIGN ENROLLED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS THROUGH DECEMBER 5, 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
November 15, 2006.

I hereby appoint the Honorable FRANK R. WOLF and the Honorable TOM DAVIS to act as Speaker pro tempore to sign enrolled bills and joint resolutions through December 5, 2006.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the appointment is approved.

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON TODAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule is dispensed with today.

There was no objection.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I regret that, due to a doctor's appointment yesterday, I was unable to vote on H.R. 6314, a bill extending certain authorities to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out important services that assist America's veterans, and H.R. 864, the Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes" on the motion to suspend the rules and agree to both H.R. 6314 and H.R. 864. Veterans who have fought to preserve the freedom and liberty enjoyed in this country deserve our relentless support and commitment. I will continue to show this commitment and pursue legislation such as my bill, The Healthy Vets Act, which would require the VA Secretary to contract with local doctors and hospitals on a case-by-case basis to provide medical services including primary care for those veterans who live far away from VA facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to clarify my position regarding H.R. 6314 and look forward to fostering efforts to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

□ 1200

BUSH INITIATES IRAQ POLICY REVIEW

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, headline today, Bush initiates Iraq policy review separate from Baker's group. Now, this might be good; it might be bad. Remember, the Bush administra-

tion ignored the advice of the State Department Middle East experts about postwar Iraq. He actually ignored the intelligence agencies, the real experts, as opposed to the phony group DICK CHENEY put together. Is he now again going to end-run real experts who are going to give us real choices on how to extricate the United States from Iraq, get our troops out of the middle of a civil war and begin to have those people take care of their own problems?

Only time will tell, but this does cause tremendous concern that suddenly he is going to appoint yet another group in his own administration. It seems like he may want to counter-balance or pick and choose among the real recommendations. Hopefully, they are not going to give us another vacuous document like they did a year ago, the so-called national strategy for victory in Iraq, which has been an abysmal failure.

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

(Mr. CARDOZA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Saturday, November 18, as National Adoption Day and to celebrate all adoptive families.

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, courtrooms across this country will come together to dedicate the resources of our judicial system to finalize adoptions of kids currently in the foster care system.

In the 5 years since National Adoption Day was established, it has truly grown into a national celebration. Last year, 3,300 adoptions were finalized as part of 227 nationwide events. These finalized adoptions are cause for celebration. This is a time to commemorate those families that have decided to make a difference in the life of a child.

I commend these families and hope that the children across the Nation will find a place to call home this Saturday as part of National Adoption Day.

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In the 5 years since National Adoption Day was established, it has truly grown into a national celebration. Last year, 3,300 adoptions were finalized as part of 227 nationwide events.

Unfortunately, despite the declining number of children waiting in foster care, there are still 118,000 children seeking adoption.

This is simply unacceptable. It is our duty as a prosperous Nation to unite and ensure these children find safe, loving homes.

Six years ago, my wife and I decided to expand our family and open our home to two foster care children.

Like many adoptive families, we faced many challenges during this process. But these experiences have only made our family stronger.

The adoption process is often complicated and riddled with paperwork, meetings, and home studies—important factors when accessing the ability of a family to care for a new child—but they can also discourage qualified parents from embarking on the adoption process.

The foster care community has been working with Congress and State governments across the country to streamline the adoption process and focus on limited resources, such as requiring frequent home visits and experienced caseworkers.

As Members of Congress, it is our job to be the voice for foster children and make sure their dreams are recognized. We owe it to them to streamline the adoption process to ensure positive outcomes for these kids.

It is important that we continue to make this process more accessible to families so that these children can be welcomed into loving homes.

Despite the obstacles that we still need to overcome, this is a time to celebrate those families that have decided to make a difference in the life of a child.

I commend these families and hope that children across the Nation will find a place to call home this Saturday as part of National Adoption Day.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE AMERICAN WARRIOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Saturday we celebrated Veterans Day. Veterans Day is a holiday, but it is more of a memorial. It is a day we honor those who served. It started because of the end of the war to end all wars, World War I, and on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the First World War stopped, and because of that, since then we honor all veterans who have served.

Memorial Day is the day we honor those who served and died. Veterans Day is the day we honor those who served and lived.

In this House of Representatives today, in the 109th Congress, about 25 percent of Congress has served in the military. In 1950, in the fifties, about 65 percent were veterans; 111 Members of Congress served during the Vietnam era, 78 of whom served in the Vietnam era, and 20 of those saw combat. We have our own SAM JOHNSON, who was a Navy pilot during Vietnam, was shot down and spent 7 years in the Hanoi Hilton prisoner-of-war camp.

We have in this House of Representatives at least eight Members who have sons or daughters serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. We have Senator INOUE of Hawaii who was a Medal of Honor winner. All of these people served and served with honor.

War for independence costs the lives of Americans. Freedom has always cost, and it always will, and I think it is worth noting the time frame of the wars that this country has fought in and those who died.

In the War of Independence, 5,000 Americans died. In the Mexican-American War, there were 13,000 Americans. In the War Between the States, there were 250,000 Confederates and 350,000 troops of the Union army, but they were all Americans; 600,000 died for this country. In World War I, there was 116,000. In the great World War II, 408,000 died for this country.

My dad was one of those who served in the great World War II, and he, like many veterans of that war, never talked of that engagement until many, many years after that war was over with.

In Korea, it is sometimes said of the Korea war it is the forgotten war, 55,000 Americans died. In Vietnam, 58,000 died. In the first gulf war, 300 troopers died, and in our latest fight in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, 3,000 have died.

The point being, in these few wars that I have mentioned, not all of the wars, this country has always called upon the American warrior to be the one to protect us from the forces of all evil.

I have had the honor to be in Iraq with many of our troops, as many of our House Members have been, and I find them to be, in my opinion, the greatest military ever assembled, with their morale extremely high.

Over Labor Day weekend, I had the honor to go and see some of our troops in military hospitals overseas and to see and visit with them, and before I went, I asked my staff in Texas to see if we could arrange to have some of the local school kids write and make some homemade cards. In 2 days' notice, they were able to produce about 5,000 handmade cards that I took to our troops overseas, who were very grateful.

The point being, I think now in this time in our history our country is grateful to the American warrior for putting their life on the line for the rest of us. So we can do no better than to honor those who have served, the American warrior. And though it was said in the Vietnam era that some gave all and all gave some, that is true of the American veteran. So we thank them on this day and every day, those that served and lived and those that served and did die for this country.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SMART SECURITY

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last week the American people voted for a new direction in the Nation's Iraq policy. If anything, with the mandate this Democratic majority received, we can be more unapologetic than ever about demanding an end to the Iraq occupation and insisting that we bring our troops home.

But I believe Iraq is a symptom of an even larger problem, that is, a foreign policy that chooses saber rattling over diplomacy and negotiation.

We need an entirely new national security paradigm. For too long, we have equated national security with war and with conquest. It is time we used less brawn and more brains to protect our people and our interests.

Iraq is exhibit A in the case that hawkishness does not necessarily make America safer.

That is where a SMART security plan comes. SMART stands for sensible, multilateral, American response to terrorism.

At its core is a belief that war is a very last resort, that peacekeeping and diplomacy, not invasion and occupation, must be the guiding lights of our foreign policy.

SMART also focuses on stopping the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Not by deposing regimes that do not have them, but with diplomacy, with vigorous inspection regimes and regional security arrangements.

SMART calls for a renewed commitment to the cooperative threat reduction program and calls on the United States to set an example for the world by living up to our own commitments to draw down our nuclear arsenal.

Because, Mr. Speaker, what moral authority do we have to pressure Iran or North Korea about their nuclear ambitions when our government consistently undermines the nuclear and ignores our multilateral obligations in this very area?

Being smart about national security means dramatically rearranging our budget priorities, which in turn means fewer obsolete Cold War weapons systems and more investment in strategies that actually address the security challenges of a new era.

Any smart approach to national security must include an ambitious international development program for impoverished nations, debt relief, democracy building, schooling for women and girls, human rights education, environmental programs, infrastructure development and more.

Think about this, Mr. Speaker. With the money spent on the invasion and occupation of Iraq, we could have fully funded global antihunger efforts for 14 years or provided basic immunization

to children around the world for 113 years or fully funded worldwide AIDS programs for 34 years. We could have spent hundreds of billions of dollars to save lives, instead of destroying them.

For the sake of the next generation, the only future that we have got, before we have destroyed civilization itself, we should strive for nothing less than the end of all wars.

Because of the insanity of war and its disproportionate impact on children, I am pledging never again to cast a vote in Congress in favor of any military action, barring an attack on the United States or protecting against genocide and/or ethnic cleansing, and then only with multilateral humanitarian intervention.

Nor will I pick sides in violent global conflicts, except to condemn all acts of war and terror regardless of ideology, regardless of national interests or religion that motivates them. I refuse to decide who is less wrong.

If I could be persuaded that taking up arms actually builds enduring stability, I would reconsider my position, but this notion that war begets peace is as illogical as it sounds. Our preemptive strike on Iraq has, in fact, been a catalyst for increased violence and higher rates of terrorism. Our continued occupation is emboldening the insurgents rather than defeating them. Instead of liberating a nation, the Bush doctrine has ripped it apart, ripped it apart at the seams, and instead of protecting America, it has dealt a blow to our very security.

"War," said Martin Luther King, Junior, "is a poor chisel to carve out tomorrow." Tomorrow belongs to our children. So for their sake, Mr. Speaker, let us protect America by relying not on our basest impulses, but on the most honorable and humane of American values, and let us bring our troops home now from Iraq.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SODREL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING DR. ROBERT LIPSON

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of turn for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a great man who led a purpose-driven life that touched many in my State of Georgia and around the country. Unfortunately, he lost his life Friday afternoon in Marietta, Georgia, riding home from work at Kennestone Hospital on his motorcycle, just a mile and a half from his home.

Dr. Robert Lipson, the chief executive officer and president of Wellstar